

AmeriCorps

On July 17, 2013, members of the Montana State Parks AmeriCorps Program were scheduled to serve in support of a special event in the historic ghost town of Bannack when a flash flood swept through the town. The team of 14 AmeriCorps members jumped into action documenting artifacts unearthed and scattered through the flood zone. Said member Leslie Dinsmore, "while the flood was very unfortunate, the opportunity to help with this project was a fantastic and rewarding experience." As a whole members spent more than 224 hours cataloging the location of artifacts using GPS tagging and bagging each item.

AmeriCorps NCCC

AmeriCorps NCCC members have helped the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC) maintain the historical value of Virginia City and neighboring Nevada City, gold-mining ghost towns that serve as vital representations of Montana's cultural heritage. NCCC members' work included invasive species removal, historical collections preservation, trash removal, fence construction and maintenance, building repairs, and trail improvements. Additionally, the team was able to assist with unusual yet important tasks like installing railroad crossing signs, painting train passenger cars, sifting for artifacts at archeological excavations, and putting period wagons on blocks to support their weight. The NCCC teams working with MHC have benefitted the community by making the area safer and aesthetically pleasing to visitors and residents, as well as maintaining the two historical sites.

AmeriCorps VISTA

One Montana Legal Services Association AmeriCorps VISTA Project member and one VISTA Summer Associate serving with the State Bar of Montana supported an effort to expand the legal information and resources available to benefit veterans and military families throughout Montana. The member developed a comprehensive legal needs survey and with assistance from the Summer Associate distributed the survey throughout the state. Analysis of the 339 responses from veterans, active duty members, and immediate family members statewide revealed the topics of need for veterans and military families. From there the member developed a 70-page guide to personal finance and finance related law in conjunction with the Law Related Education Committee. The publication will be printed and posted online and distributed throughout Montana to assist veterans and military families with legal information.

Senior Corps

In Montana, 190 Senior Companions served 181,612 hours with 1,131 at-risk seniors, of which 789 (or 70 percent) retained independence, delaying use of Medicaid funds for nursing home placement. The average cost of care in a nursing home in Montana is \$72,226 annually of which residents pay approximately 32 percent, Medicaid pays 61 percent, and Medicare pays 7 percent. For those 789 seniors the cost would have been \$56,986,314. The annual cost to operate the three Senior Companion Programs is \$1,021,473, consisting of \$781,228 in CNCS funds and \$240,245 in local funds, resulting in a potential estimate savings of \$55.9 million. According to Kevin Brown, from Montana Adult Protective Services, "The Senior Companion program is a very important aspect to maintaining our clients and assuring their safety. I cannot imagine anything more valuable to those of us seeking assistance and help to the welfare of our clients".